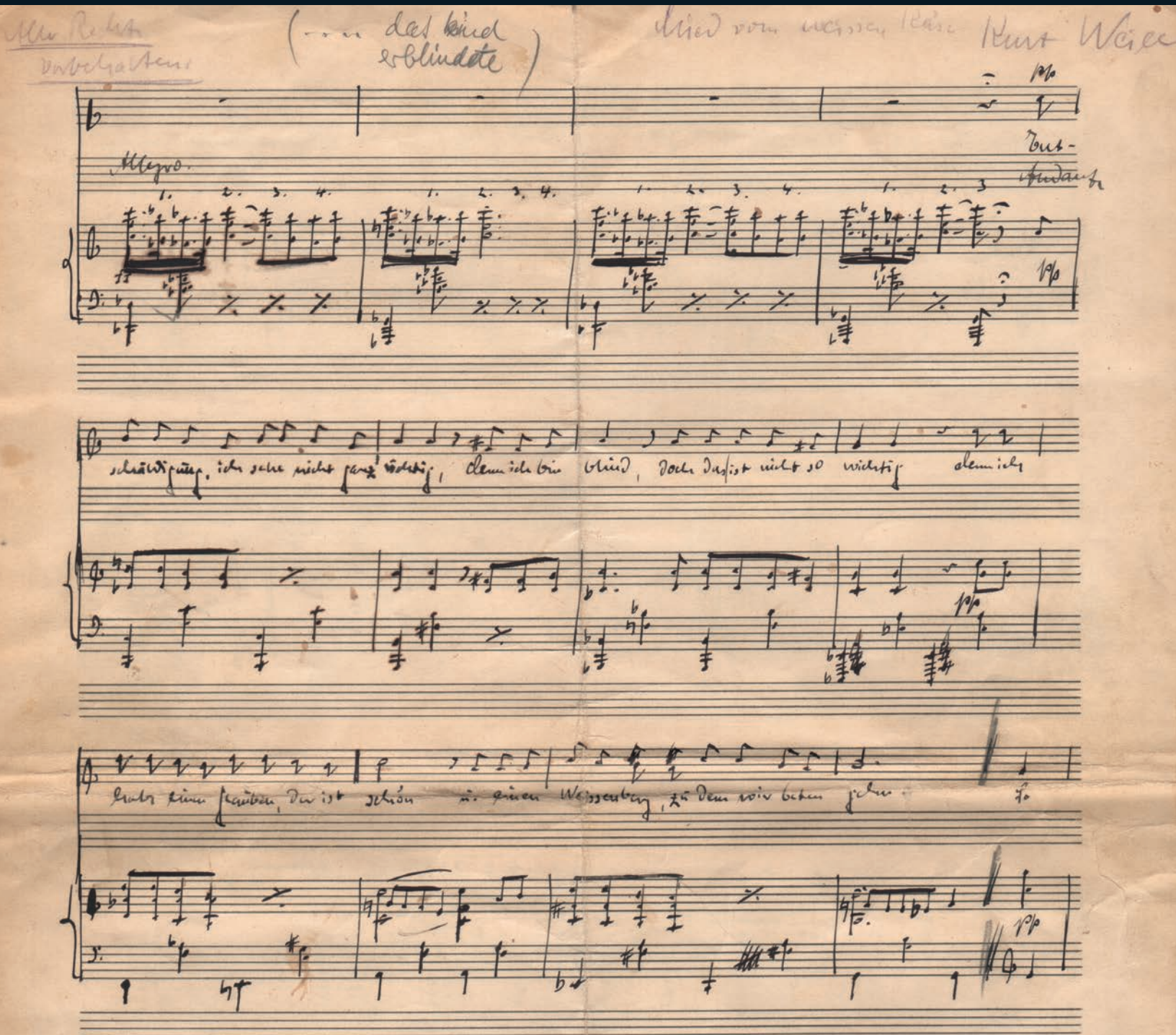


Kurt Weill Newsletter

VOLUME 35

NUMBER 2

FALL 2017



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Lied vom blinden Mädchen (Lied vom weißen Käse): Stunning Discovery in Berlin

From Lenya Competition to *Love Life*: Interviews with David Arnsperger and Rebecca Jo Loeb

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Cover photo: Portion of the first page of Weill's holograph manuscript of "Lied vom weißen Käse," composed for a revue in 1931 to a text by Günther Weisenborn. Original manuscript held by the Freie Universität Berlin, Institute of Theater Studies, Gerda Schaefer Papers

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A variety of opinions are expressed in the *Newsletter*; they do not necessarily represent the publisher's official viewpoint. Letters to the editor are welcome.

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CORRECTION

I'm always happy to read the *Kurt Weill Newsletter*. I would like to point out that the original orchestration of *The Cradle Will Rock* has been performed at least once since the New York City Opera production in 1960 ["Blitzstein in Saratoga Springs," p. 20, Spring 2017]. La clef des chants (www.laclefdeschants.com) staged a full production at the Opéra de Lille in 2004; Bernard Yannotta conducted the original score.

Jean Lacornerie
Lille

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Weill world turned upside down, or at least sustained a powerful jolt, this fall with the discovery of a Kurt Weill manuscript undiscovered and unknown for decades in the special collections of the Freie Universität Berlin. A song not heard since 1931 becomes the first Weill music of any substance unearthed since 1983, when the Foundation gained access to a number of early scores in his family's possession. Elmar Juchem, Managing Editor of the Kurt Weill Edition, authenticated the manuscript and also pinned down the occasion on which it was first performed; he tells the whole story in this issue. Extensive press coverage, led by the *New York Times* in the U.S. and numerous outlets in Germany, has heralded the find, but you'll get the full behind-the-scenes account here.

And there's more. Two big stories that the newfound manuscript has not displaced: the German premiere of *Love Life* at Theater Freiburg draws near; and the next volume of the Kurt Weill Edition, *Lady in the Dark*, has rolled off the press. We've interviewed the *Love Life* leads, David Arnsperger and Rebecca Jo Loeb, both prizewinners of past Lotte Lenya Competitions. The usual reviews and news round out the issue, complete with a chronicle of the achievements of Lenya Competition prizewinners all over, not just in Freiburg. Kim H. Kowalke pays tribute to Martus Granirer, one of the best friends the Foundation ever had.

Dave Stein

Street Scene in Madrid

Street Scene enjoys a major international co-production in Spring 2018, as Madrid's Teatro Real teams up with Opéra de Monte Carlo and Oper Köln to present a brand-new staging (premiere date: 13 February). Patricia Racette will portray Anna Maurrant; the role of her husband Frank is taken by Paulo Szot, who won renown, and a Tony Award, in *South Pacific* at Lincoln Center in 2008. Racette needs no introduction as an habitué of the world's leading opera stages; this will be her first Weill stage work, notwithstanding her service as a judge for the Lenya Competition finals in 2013. Mary Bevan and Joel Prieto will sing Rose Maurrant and Sam Kaplan, respectively.

British director John Fulljames stages the production. In 2008, Fulljames directed *Street Scene* at the Young Vic in London, which earned the *Evening Standard* Award for Best Musical that year and drew raves from the London press. In 2013, Fulljames toured the same production to Paris and Barcelona, where it earned further acclaim. Tim Murray, who made his professional debut as musical director for the 2013 tour, will conduct in Madrid as well.

The combination of three opera companies and an international cast will grant Fulljames considerably greater resources than he had nine years ago. Teatro Real calls *Street Scene* "one of the most important events of the season." After its widely celebrated *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny* in 2010 with La Fura dels Baus (still available on DVD from Bel Air Classiques), who can doubt it?



Patricia Racette

PHOTO: DEVON CASS



Paulo Szot

PHOTO: LAURA MARIE DUNCAN

"Babylon Berlin"

A new television series, "Babylon Berlin," based on a series of crime novels by Volker Kutscher, is in full swing on Sky-TV in Germany; the first episode attracted a record number of viewers for the network. Co-directed by Tom Tykwer (*Run Lola Run*) and orchestrated by Gene Pritsker—who arranged the Symphonic Suite from *Johnny Johnson*—the series takes place in 1929 at a crucial time in the history of the Weimar Republic. *Die Dreigroschenoper* was part of the very air in Berlin at that time, and one episode contains a scene set in the Theater am Schiffbauerdamm during a performance. The "Moritat von Mackie Messer"—"Mack the Knife"—will be heard in the soundtrack. The elaborate production values are bolstered by a budget of \$45 million, the highest in the history of German television. Already a hit in Europe, the series will stream on Netflix beginning 30 January 2018. So far, the studio has delivered two full seasons of episodes. Read more at <http://tinyurl.com/y7setljp>.

Mackie Messer: Brecht's Dreigroschenfilm

A new film that revisits controversies surrounding the first film version of *Die Dreigroschenoper* (1930) is in the works at Süddeutsche Rundfunk. *Mackie Messer: Brecht's Dreigroschenfilm* takes up Brecht's proposed screenplay, whose rejection led to a lawsuit, and imagines how the film might have turned out had Brecht had greater control. The cast includes German film star Tobias Moretti (who played Macheath in Vienna last year) and that avatar of popular music of the Weimar era, Max Raabe (who sang Macheath on the 1999 RCA recording of the complete score of *Die Dreigroschenoper*). New recordings of portions of Weill's original score are conducted by the uniquely qualified HK Gruber; the producers plan a commercial CD release of selections from the soundtrack. Look for the first screening of the film in Germany on 18 March 2018!

New Weill Recording from Ensemble Modern

Watch for the premiere recordings of the critical edition of *Mahagonny Songspiel* and *Chansons des quais* (from *Marie Galante*), along with *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik*, conducted by HK Gruber. Europe's leading new music ensemble augments its Weill discography with this new album, due out in 2018.

“Probably Buried in Some Basement”

The Surprising Discovery of an Unknown Weill Song

by Elmar Juchem

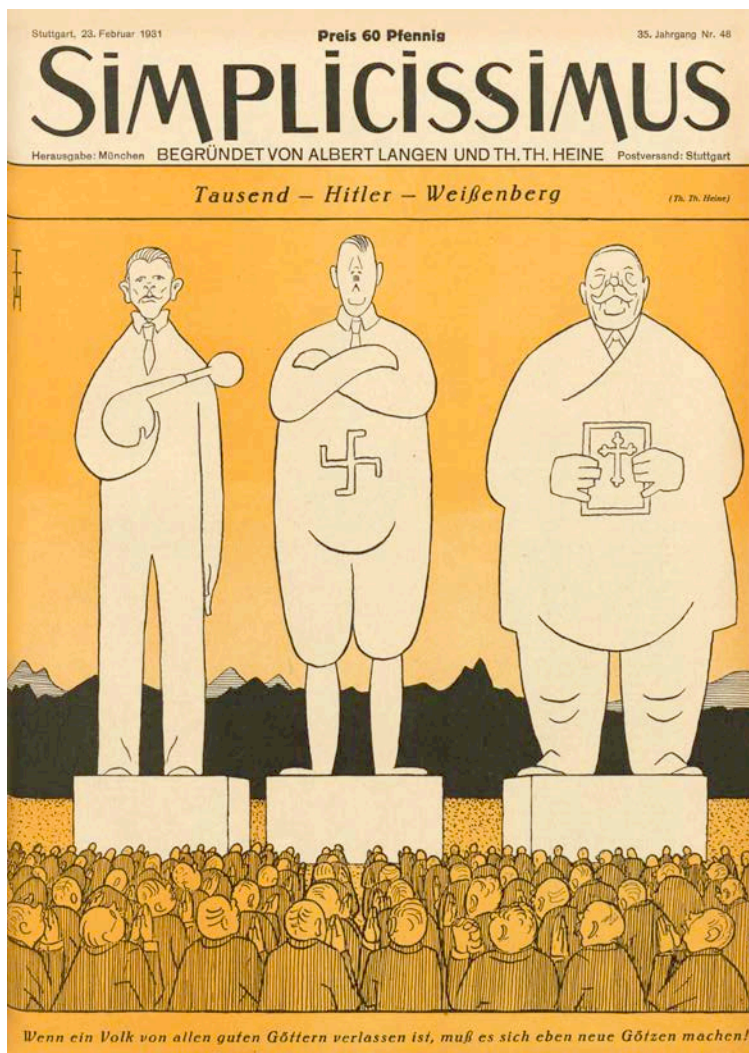
In mid-September, hoping to find an original program for *Happy End*, I contacted the department of theater studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. This 1929 follow-up to *Die Dreigroschenoper* is scheduled to appear as the next volume of the Kurt Weill Edition, and my co-editor Stephen Hinton and I decided it certainly should include a facsimile of the program. I had tried several other archives and struck out each time, so the search was becoming urgent. When the archivist informed me that the university owned not one but two originals, I was delighted.

During my visit to the repository, archivist Dr. Peter Jammerthal also pulled some fascinating photos of the original production that I had never seen. Pleased to find a rich source of rare but vital material, I asked whether he knew of any other Weill-related items in their collections. The university holds the papers of set designer Traugott Müller and actor Lothar Müthel, for example, both major figures of Weimar-era theater who participated in a 1928 Berlin production of Arnolt Bronnen's *Katalaunische Schlacht*, for which Weill composed incidental music that has never been located. Jammerthal produced a number of relevant programs, production photos, and press clippings. As an afterthought he mentioned a “curious” music manuscript that appeared to bear Weill's name but sported a rather silly and wholly unfamiliar title: “Lied vom weißen Käse” (White Cheese Song). He didn't know what to make of it. I didn't hold my breath, having seen plenty of scores misattributed to Weill. When Jammerthal added that the unidentified manuscript survives in the fragmentary papers of a minor actress, Gerda Schaefer, my skepticism seemed confirmed. I shrugged and waited for him to bring out what would surely be a scribbled score under an illegible title, which probably had nothing to do with either white cheese or Weill.

I was dumbstruck when I saw the manuscript's first page: a dazzling holograph fair copy in ink, to which Weill had appended the peculiar title and his signature in pencil. A holograph note in the top left corner indicates that he took the song seriously, apparently thinking it might have real potential: “Alle Rechte vorbehalten” (all rights reserved). The handwriting suggested that the song was composed during Weill's last years in Berlin, but the manuscript offered no hints about the identity of its lyricist. An unknown hand had added what appears to be a stage cue at the top of the first page: “... das Kind erblindete” (the child went blind). Sure enough, a blind girl is the song's narrator.

That triggered memories. David Drew's catalogue of Weill's music (*Kurt Weill: A Handbook*, 1987) has a brief chapter on “doubtful and chimerical works,” in which he

speculates about a composition titled “Das Lied vom blinden Mädchen” with lyrics by Günther Weisenborn (1902–1969). Drew's account suggests that such a song may have been intended for a theatrical production by the Berlin Volksbühne. In April 1930, the theater presented the German-language premiere of *Hoboken Blues* (1927) by American playwright Michael Gold. The play had been adapted into German by Hermynia Zur Mühlen, a well-known literary figure who had translated all of Upton Sinclair's novels. Weisenborn further adapted her translation for the Volksbühne and interpolated additional song texts of his own. Lenya played the female lead in *Das Lied von Hoboken*—the production also featured nineteen-year-old Dolly Haas in a supporting role—and her performance received favorable reviews that also mention her singing. The program, however, lists Wilhelm Grosz as the composer of the incidental music, and a script produced as rental material at the end of 1929 contains nothing re-



The cover of *Simplicissimus*, 23 February 1931, depicts alchemist Franz Tausend, Adolf Hitler, and faith healer Joseph Weissenberg as mountebanks looming over the masses. The caption at the bottom reads, “When the people have been abandoned by the real gods, they must make false ones!”

motely like a “white cheese song.” Still, in a letter of 27 January 1930, Weill mentioned the upcoming *Hoboken* production to Lenya and informed her that rehearsals would begin on 20 February. Might he have composed a song for her at the last minute and then declined credit? Even more tantalizing, one reviewer called Grosz’s music an “imitation of Weill”—but maybe the production included a solitary example of the real thing.

The song’s lyrics tell a much different story, however. The protagonist recounts her failed treatment at the hands of a notorious Berlin faith healer, Joseph Weißenberg (1855–1941), a favorite subject of the tabloids in the 1920s. Daniel Körner’s *Die Wunderheiler* [faith healers] *der Weimarer Republik* (Freiburg: Centaurus, 2012) devotes a twenty-page chapter to Weißenberg titled “Quarkwickel und zwei Vater-unser” (white cheese bandages and two Our-Fathers), a reference to his signature healing method. The chapter chronicles Weißenberg’s rise; he started out as a bricklayer, then worked as a coachman and

tended bar before discovering his religious “healing powers” in 1903. He managed to establish a religious order in 1926, which developed a huge following. Adulation aside, he faced several lawsuits during his long career, and one in particular drew my attention. In November 1930, he was tried for medical malpractice, having treated two patients with white cheese to disastrous effect: a diabetic man who died; and an infant girl with an eye infection who went blind. A jury convicted him (but only in the latter case), and he received a six-month prison sentence. The affair was front-page news. We can begin to understand the extent of Weißenberg’s notoriety from the cover of a February 1931 issue of the widely known satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*, which featured him alongside Hitler and another charlatan, an alchemist named Franz Tausend.

Why would a play set in Harlem and Hoboken have made reference to a faith healer in Berlin? And Lenya’s “mulatto” character was not blind, nor were any other characters in the play. Drew did not have access to the script of *Hoboken*. He based his conclusions on an exchange of letters among Lenya, Weisen-

born, and himself during 1963–64, which Drew had initiated in an attempt to determine whether Weill was involved in the play and which song Lenya might have sung. She had completely forgotten the “blind maiden” song, but one of Weisenborn’s letters jogged her memory; her last words on the matter concluded that the “blind maiden” song was not part of *Hoboken* but that she had sung it “at some benefit.” Drew seems to have discounted her recollection, because he believed that Lenya’s and Weisenborn’s artistic paths had crossed only once (in *Hoboken*). As it turns out, they intersected twice.

The second encounter came the following fall, after the economic and political situation in Berlin had taken a sharp turn for the worse. Unemployment reached a peak, and in September 1931, on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, hordes of SA members (Brown-shirts) attacked Jewish parishioners as they filed out of two synagogues on Kurfürstendamm—an unprecedented event in liberal Berlin. With tensions run-

ning high, the Volksbühne decided to avoid politically charged repertoire, even though the theater (literally the “People’s Stage”) had been established in 1890 by Social Democrats as an institution expressly intended for the working class. A band of young actors broke away in protest to form the Junge Volksbühne, dedicated to the proletariat and overtly leftist political theater. One of the many projects the new group had in mind was a “red revue.” In fall 1931, when the regular Volksbühne temporarily laid off junior company members because the theater had decided to put on an operetta (Offenbach’s *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*), the Junge Volksbühne resolved to enlist big-name leftist artists in Berlin (some of whom were card-carrying members of the KPD, Germany’s Communist Party): writers Bertolt Brecht, Ernst Ottwalt, Erich Weinert, and Günther Weisenborn; composers Hanns Eisler, Friedrich Hollaender, and Kurt Weill; and actors Ernst Busch, Blandine Ebinger, Valeska Gert, Lotte Lenya, and Helene Weigel. The revue offers glimpses into the lives of a fictitious lower middle-class German family named Freese, whose four members remain politically complacent despite their



The program from a later performance of *Wir sind ja sooo zufrieden ...* lacks some names listed for the first performance, notably Hollaender (under “Musik”) and Blandine Ebinger (under “Mitwirkende”). The absence of a date and venue reflects the difficulties faced by the Junge Volksbühne in trying to line up repeat performances. Photo: Billy Rose Theatre Division, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

economic struggles. The father is a Social Democrat and retired plumber living on welfare; the mother, a cleaning woman, falls for Weissenberg's teachings; the unemployed son is lured into joining the SA; and the daughter, an unemployed typist, is pregnant but can't get an abortion because it is illegal. Rather than portraying an idealized proletarian family, the Junge Volksbühne portrayed the options for the beleaguered middle class: either develop class consciousness and solidarity with the poor, or go down with fascism.

Eisler contributed the lion's share of musical material (the better-known numbers included the "Lied vom SA-Mann," the "Bankenlied," and the first draft of the "Solidaritätslied"), but it is unclear exactly what Hollaender added or how Weill became involved at all. Among the writers, Weisenborn appears to have contributed more texts than anyone other than Brecht. Entitled *Wir sind ja sooo zufrieden ...* ("We are perrrrfectly content"), the revue premiered on 17 November 1931 at the Bachsaal, a concert hall with 1,160 seats. Lenya most likely rendered Weill's song in Act II as part of a scene titled "Flucht in die Mystik" (escape into mysticism). A review published in the Communist newspaper *Die Rote Fahne* provides more context:

Yet we can already follow the crumbling of this heaven-ordained social order, which the Freese family has submitted to almost without resistance. Some of the scenes are truly provocative and will convince our opponents to come around. . . . For example, we hear the "Lied vom weißen Käse" when Frau Freese has fallen for the prophet Weissenberg's mystical ministrations. Blind faith is here called by its right name as the church spires

collapse. This is the key to creating a revolutionary art that will have lasting effects; when we talk about this revue, we must not forget this impact.

The revue's rousing political message appears to have been anticipated by wary city officials. When the audience left the concert hall late that night, they were greeted by police in riot gear and told to disperse.

In 1963 Weisenborn recalled that Lenya had come onstage as a blind girl in shabby clothing and that her performance elicited tremendous applause. In light of the revue's success, the Junge Volksbühne frantically tried to schedule repeat performances but ran into difficulties, either due to financial constraints (one venue demanded cash up front for three consecutive performances) or building code restrictions. Still, eager audiences had a chance to see the show again on 28 November 1931, again at the Bachsaal and featuring the same cast. On 17 December the revue played another performance at the Musiker-Festsäle, a venue that served primarily as a dance hall. This performance may explain how Weill's original manuscript ended up in the papers of Gerda Schaefer (1909–?). She had been an ensemble member of the Volksbühne since 1930 and had played a tiny role in *Das Lied von Hoboken*. Because Lenya was rehearsing the part of Jenny for the Berlin production of *Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny*, which opened on 21 December at the Theater am Kurfürstendamm, Schaefer may have taken over for Lenya as the blind girl in the revue. She would have needed a score.

A closer look at Weill's manuscript reveals a few more details. The back page bears an annotation: "weisshaus / friedrich franzstrasse 22 atelier / berlin tempelhof / (phone [sic]: südtring

Günther Weisenborn (1902–1969)

His first success as a writer came in October 1928, when the Berlin Volksbühne produced the play *U-Boot S4*, which dealt with a contemporary American submarine tragedy. He moved to Berlin in 1929 after getting acquainted with Erwin Piscator and Bertolt Brecht. That year he adapted Michael Gold's *Hoboken Blues* for the Volksbühne. The following year he created a stage adaptation of Maxim Gorky's novel *The Mother*, which he further adapted and reworked with Brecht and Eisler in 1931, around the time the "red revue" was conceived. Weisenborn's works were banned by the Nazis. In 1937 he spent some time in the U.S. but returned to Germany, where he nominally worked as a *Dramaturg* at Berlin's Schillertheater but engaged in the German resistance. The Gestapo arrested him in 1942; he narrowly escaped a death sentence and spent the rest of the war in a prison camp. After 1945, he settled in Hamburg where he continued his career. In 1963, he worked with Wolfgang Staudte on the screenplay of a film based on *Die Dreigroschenoper* that starred Curd Jürgens and Hildegard Knef. The wartime diaries and correspondence of Weisenborn and his wife, Joy, were published in Germany last summer under the title *Liebe in Zeiten des Hochverrats* (Love in Times of High Treason).

Photo of Lenya in Berlin, probably in costume as the blind girl



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE WEILL-LENYA RESEARCH CENTER

1255),” probably scribbled by Imre Weisshaus (1905–1987), later known as Paul Arma, a Bartók student who had spent a few years as composer-pianist in the U.S. before moving to Berlin in 1931, where he immersed himself in the workers’ chorus movement and became an assistant to Eisler for a brief period. Also written on the back is another address (“Babelsberger Str. 52”), which is where Helene Weigel lived in the early 1930s.

The song is a gem. Deceptively simple, it contains a dizzying number of facets that sparkle more or less, depending on which the performer chooses to hold up to the light. The compositional arc is clear, though. After a bouncy foxtrot prologue (marked *fortissimo*) that functions as a “curtain raiser” and may signal that the following is an “act” that shouldn’t be taken too seriously, the accompaniment falls into a slow but steady stride while the girl gives an unsentimental rendition of her sad story. Each stanza ends with a caesura followed by a line from the well-known Protestant hymn (1862) “So nimm denn meine Hände” (Lord, Take My Hand and Lead Me) by Julie Hausmann set to a pre-existing melody by Friedrich Silcher. Weill quotes Silcher’s familiar tune but accompanies it with his own sly harmonization, creating a grotesque if not comical effect. At the end of the song, when her cottage cheese treatment has failed, the girl suggests that perhaps everybody would be better off blind, so that no one would have to see “what’s going on in this world right now.” For this last line, Weill added a decisive crescendo to emphasize the shift into the

political realm. Yet he concludes the song in Weillian fashion with a pithy epilogue (the foxtrot now marked *piano*) that echoes the beginning and brings down the figurative curtain. The song does make you wish that Weill and Weisenborn hadn’t stopped with this solitary collaboration.

Lenya was disappointed when she could not recall the song or trace the music. “Nowhere to be found,” she wrote to Weisenborn in January 1964, adding that it was “probably buried in some basement,” which may well have been true at that point: Schaefer’s papers did not reach the Freie Universität until much later. By a strange coincidence, Lenya had begun her search for lost Weill materials at precisely this university in 1955. She apparently sought help from the head of the theater department, Hans Knudsen, who had been a critic in the 1920s. Knudsen assigned one of his doctoral students, Andreas Meyer-Hanno, to support Lenya in her search and guide her through the irritating maze of postwar institutions in Berlin (his account appeared in the *Newsletter*, Spring 1985). On 14 April 1955, the Berlin daily *Der Tagesspiegel* announced her efforts to locate Weill-related material and asked readers to send responses to the university. That search did not yield the “blind maiden” song, but it did turn up other crucial items, namely Weill’s holograph full scores for “Bilbao-Song” and “Surabaya-Johnny,” composed in 1929 for *Happy End*. If these hadn’t been found then, my own search probably never would have begun, and the “blind girl” might still be in the dark.

Text of the first stanza of “Lied vom weißen Käse”

lyrics by Günther Weisenborn

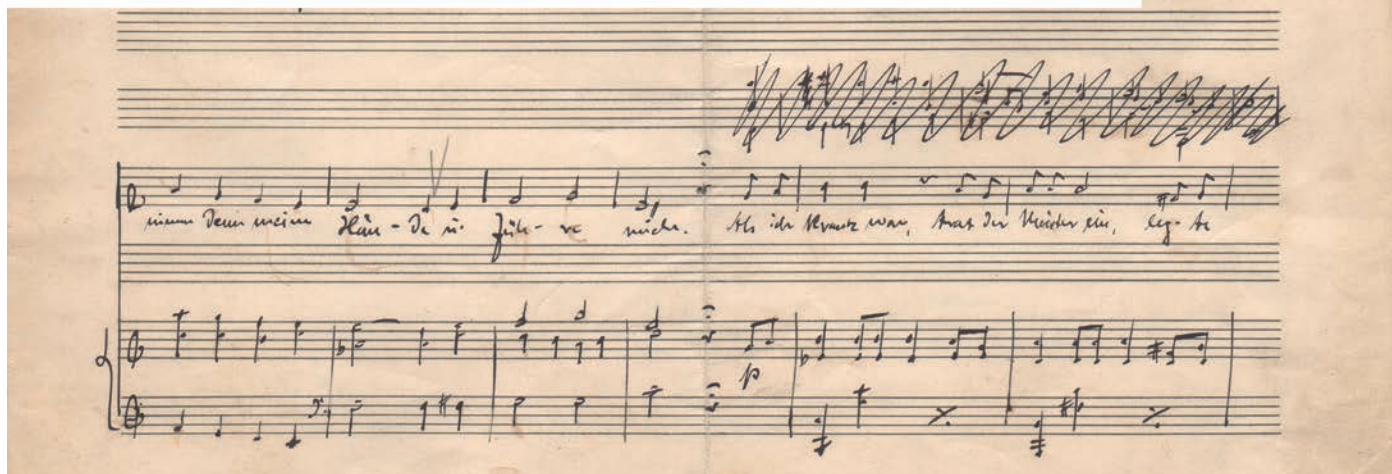
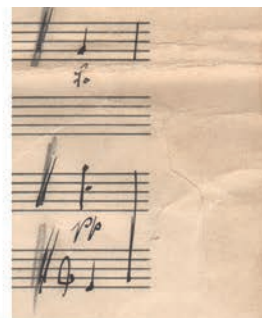
Entschuldigung, ich sehe nicht ganz richtig,
Denn ich bin blind, doch das ist nicht so wichtig,
Denn ich habe einen Glauben, der ist schön,
Und einen Weissenberg, zu dem wir beten gehn.
So nimm denn meine Hände und führe mich.

[Non-singing English translation]

Excuse me, I don’t see all that well,
For I am blind, but that’s not all that important,
Because I have a faith that is beautiful,
And a Weissenberg whom we go and worship.
So take my hands and lead me.

Foundation staff are preparing a performing edition, including an English translation by Michael Feingold, of “Lied vom weißen Käse,” which will be published soon by European American Music. To see the video of a performance of two excerpts by soprano Ute Gfrerer and pianist Shane Schag, go to the *New York Times* report on the discovery at <https://nyti.ms/2j6G9IX>.

This passage from Weill’s score shows the quotation from “So nimm denn meine Hände” set to Silcher’s melody with Weill’s harmonization in the piano part. Original manuscript held by the Freie Universität Berlin, Institut für Theaterwissenschaft, Theaterhistorische Sammlungen, Nachlass Gerda Schaefer.



From Lenya Competition to *Love Life*

Rebecca Jo Loeb and David Arnsperger have only a few things in common. She grew up and went to school in the U.S.; he in Germany. She sings mainly opera; he concentrates on musical theater. She's a she, and he isn't. But they share two crucial characteristics: they have both won prizes in the Lotte Lenya Competition; and they will be playing the lead roles—Susan Cooper and Samuel Cooper respectively—in the German premiere of *Love Life*, which opens at Theater Freiburg on 9 December. We've asked them for their thoughts on the Competition, making a career in musical theater, and *Love Life*.

On the Lenya Competition . . .

How did you get started?

DA: I was always torn between opera and musical theater. I didn't want to believe that there has to be a strict boundary. The Lenya Competition was great because it makes you do both, and that was exactly what I hoped to do—take the best from both worlds.

RJL: I did it twice, actually. The first time I was still at the University of Michigan, and I made the finals but didn't win anything. But I saw how it worked and what they were looking for in terms of repertoire. So I thought, "I'm going back when I'm ready, and I think I can win it." And I did! I just needed to develop a bit, use a variety of songs, and make a good story out of them.

What sets the Lenya Competition apart?

RJL: The process is truly unique, because the judges work closely with you during auditions. And if they want to see something, they will push you. Vicki Clark was one of my judges, and she's smart and an amazing performer. She could tell that in one of my songs, I was holding part of myself back emotionally, hiding behind a prop. And she said, "We want you to do that song again, and this time, don't hide." I was impressed because she knew it, but I was also angry because I was hoping to get away with it.

DA: You can ask the Foundation for advice. I had the "Rum Tum Tugger Song" from *Cats* with a dance routine on my audition DVD. I wanted to show versatility, add some movement to my program, and emphasize my dancing skills. The Foundation advised me to select a different number, since the Competition focuses more on acting through song and telling a story in musical theater.

Can you offer any advice to future contestants?

DA: Don't be afraid to experiment. If you come from a classical background and need something from a musical, don't just reach for *Oklahoma!*. Or the other way around—don't just choose a standard opera aria. Play around with different things. Explore.

RJL: Take the opportunity to be really interesting. In opera competitions they don't always want you to show your uniqueness. But this competition is a great opportunity to show how you're different and embrace that.

On careers in musical theater . . .

How does the Lenya Competition help you prepare for a career in musical theater?

RJL: The Lenya Competition tests your ability to adapt, which is a pretty reliable indicator of how you'll do in the theater. You can learn your audition piece really well, but when you're given new material, you have to show you can be flexible, and can really work. The Competition looks for people who can adjust quickly, and that's not usually an emphasis in competitions.

DA: Doing a competition in the U.S., in English, broadened my horizons enormously. It took me out of my little German theater box. I experienced how theater's done elsewhere, saw the differences, and realized I could survive with the same tools I developed in Germany. We're all theater people together regardless of local differences.

Did winning a prize boost your career?

DA: I got a job with the Welsh National Opera to play Sweeney Todd, where James Holmes was musical director. I didn't realize until I was auditioning that he had been a judge for the Competition,

and he already knew who I was. I flew to London with no clue what was going to happen, and I got the job. Now it's paying off again in Freiburg.

RJL: I would say winning was less important than contact with the Foundation, which has put me on the radar for quite a few gigs! This is one of the few competitions where if you maintain your career, they will keep supporting you even after the prizes are awarded. I've sung at Tanglewood, Ravinia, the Kurt Weill Fest Dessau, and this year alone, lead roles in *Die sieben Todsünden* and *Love Life* because of the Foundation. You don't always



get the opportunity to sing Weill or crossover material in your career as an opera singer. It helps that I have a keen interest in the repertoire; I love singing Weill.

On *Love Life* . . .

How did you react to being offered a role in *Love Life*?

RJL: I didn't know enough about it to be excited. Usually one is excited either because of the house or the part. And I didn't know the part at all. Now that I know the piece better, I'm excited.

DA: At first, I didn't know *Love Life*, but I knew it was Kurt Weill and that was enough. I sang quite a lot of Weill in university and loved it, so I'm really glad to be part of this. I also had personal reasons to get on board right away, because I grew up in Freiburg. I took my first steps on a stage in that theater. I was a little bird at the beginning of Papageno's aria in *Zauberflöte*.

How do you see your character?

DA: I would like to avoid playing Sam as a generic husband, because it seems to me that the plot makes him responsible for everything that goes wrong. Yes, the conflicts between Sam and Susan are general, but I want to fill the character with my own experience and way of seeing the problem. Start from the individual Samuel Cooper living in the world, not just "Everyhusband."

RJL: We see Susan starting off when she's madly in love with her husband; then she changes through time and discovers more about herself. She shows a willingness to risk her heart and to try again, and she learns about love. I think it culminates with "Mr. Right," which I see as a kind of breakdown. She starts singing about this dream man and realizes he doesn't exist. All the illusions, the perfect marriage and the perfect relationship like you see in the movies or imagine them, are just not possible. But she keeps moving forward anyway.

What is your favorite song so far?

RJL: I know that "Mr. Right" is probably the crowd favorite, but I'll say "Women's Club Blues." I think it's hysterical. And it gives Susan a real feminist side, fighting for the right to vote. I also like "Is It Him or Is It Me?" That's pretty typical; I never like the hits. I'm going to try to make hits out of Susan's other songs, not just "Mr. Right" and "Green-up Time."

DA: "This Is the Life" is great because it's so expressive and has so many different colors. "Here I'll Stay" has a great romantic line, a soft line. It picks up a little drive, but then it slows again, and it's—ah! I love that one, too.

How would you compare *Love Life* or your role with other shows or roles you're familiar with?

DA: The show doesn't tell the same story in the same way throughout, but provides different chapters and different views. I just did *Titanic*, which is more of an ensemble piece; it's a small society. Each character has his or her own window, and you look in for a couple of minutes. In *Love Life*, you've got two main characters, but the time scale is not realistic, so you have a bunch of different windows. The show is divided into different types of scenes, which are set off in time but also just by the different kinds of things happening onstage. The other productions I've played in usually had conventional stories, but the way the narrative is handled in *Love Life* lets us emphasize what we want to get across to the audience.

RJL: The thing that really strikes me about Susan—more and more now that we've started working on the piece—is that she's actually a well-rounded female character. Women characters are typically the ingénue, the best friend, the mother (or grandmother), especially in more antiquated operas, and musical theater, too. In my opinion you really don't get female characters who are more than that until Kander & Ebb or Sondheim. But Susan is an exception, and that's really wonderful.



What is your overall impression of *Love Life*?

DA: The more I worked the music and discovered the variety of it, the more I liked it. It's got so many different styles and moods. It starts old-fashioned and gets more modern as you move forward in time—I love that. Then there's the big final aria, "This Is the Life." That's a whole drama right there, from the outbursts to the reflective moment where he dreams about the children and then has to push past his self-doubt.

As for the book, the central conflict is still the same and still relevant. I don't think we have less trouble in our day keeping relationships alive—maybe more. How to make them work? It's right there at the start of the show, when he's in mid-air and she's sawn in half. That's all a metaphor that stands for that age-old conflict, and it still works now.

RJL: I love it. The themes are universal, and it's so clever how they're handled in a vaudeville style. I think everyone will accept that. The show wants to be presented in a way that the main ideas will come through, without the time period and some of the style of the text distracting from universal themes. The way we speak today, the way plays are performed, is very different, and parts of the dialogue sound old-fashioned. You don't want the audience to look at it and say, "I can't relate to this; it's so dated." You want those universal themes to touch the audience. It may help that everything will be in German.

On Theater Freiburg

RJL: They just changed the *Intendant* there, so things are fluid at the moment. The company is now run by theater people instead of opera people, and that may make a big difference in overall approach. I know it does have a reputation for being a good house. They don't do so many shows, and they tend to not have big stars there, but it's often these smaller houses where big stars get their start.

DA: Rüdiger Bering, who had been one of my teachers at Universität der Künste in Berlin, called me up and said they were going to do a show in Freiburg. First he asked me if I was generally interested. And I know that they tend to emphasize both acting and music, and putting productions together in very intelligent ways, not superficial, not kitschy, not like the stereotypical musical. They don't do big, blockbuster shows. But they do a lot of very interesting work and so I was really eager to get on board.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of presenting a Broadway show in German rather than English?

RJL: It's not my native language, so it's been harder to learn, but not as bad as I thought it would be. The way that Germans express themselves is very different from the way Americans do. So, figuring out an "American feeling," in German, is a little tricky.

DA: The original language may fit better, but there is nothing like the mother tongue to tell a story in song. The emotional connection is stronger in your own language. If the songs were in English, I think the audience still would get it, but with a good translation, it's definitely better to do it in German. Especially with a show by Kurt Weill, where it's so important to get the story and the message across.

Can you predict how audiences will react?

DA: I think they're definitely going to love it. Just before I did *Sweeney Todd* in Great Britain, I saw a performance of it in Freiburg, and the audience loved it. I overheard some people saying, "I think it's good that they do more of this kind of thing, and not always serious and pedantic opera." They're quite a sophisticated audience, but they have not been exposed to many Broadway shows. I'd love to show them a more playful, emotional side. And how much you can enjoy that and still have a good high-quality show and entertainment. I think they're going to be really grateful for that.

RJL: I have no clue. Freiburg is a very different city from Berlin. Berlin tends to like edgy, very dark theater, and I imagine Freiburg will be more receptive to a generally cheery piece like this than Berlin would be. Berlin might say, "Where's the edge? Where's the death and destruction?" I'm not saying I'm a proponent of that, but that's what's popular at the moment. I think in Freiburg the audience is much more willing to check it out.

On the Kurt Weill Fest Dessau

DA: I studied in the musical theater department and, later on, also in the opera department at Universität der Künste in Berlin. At that time the university was doing a lot of Brecht and Weill, especially in the musical theater department. I performed at the Kurt Weill Fest Dessau. We went there regularly with the university and I was there I think three separate times. That was even before I did the Lenya Competition.

RJL: I performed several times at the Kurt Weill Fest, and that was initially because the Foundation threw my name in there. I guess they were looking for Lenya winners—and for the first time they had two recent prizewinners in Germany, me and Alen Hodzovic (First Prize, 2009). We come from two different worlds, but we meet in the middle in Kurt Weill land. Our program was so successful—and we had so much fun doing it—that we said, "Let's do it again." And they kept asking us back.

On Weill's music . . .

DA: The music always had a really special fascination for me. So it was great to search for material when I was preparing for the Competition—I was very happy to find "Song of the Rhineland." You have to study the music and work with it to understand how great it is, and how much fun it is. "My Kind of Night" from *Love Life* is a good example. Working on it with Jim Holmes, I realized how much is in there. The rhythmic structures are simple, but there's so much to discover in terms of harmony. It's really interesting to see how much more there is when you dig deeper.

RJL: Weill can sound very catchy and appealing, but there's always something unexpected about his music. There's just a bit of dark in the comedies and a bit of light in his darker pieces. That really appeals to me, because that's like real life. I'll be learning one of his songs, and I find I can't just sing it through without thinking, because there's always a little bend in the music that's unexpected. It's really cool!

Love Life

German Premiere at Theater Freiburg

Music and lyrics by Kurt Weill and Alan Jay Lerner

Book by Alan Jay Lerner

German translation by Rüdiger Bering

Opening night: 9 December 2017; in repertory through
6 April 2018 (13 performances)

Music Director: James Holmes

Director: Joan Anton Rechi

Lady in the Dark

Series I, Volume 16

Book by Moss Hart

Music and lyrics by Kurt Weill and Ira Gershwin

Edited by bruce d. mcclung and Elmar Juchem

The latest volume of the Kurt Weill Edition is on its way to subscribers and available for purchase: Weill's first genuine Broadway hit, *Lady in the Dark* (1941). Gertrude Lawrence, Danny Kaye, and Victor Mature all starred in the original cast. The first production racked up a total of 777 performances over the course of its Broadway run, two road tours, and a Broadway re-engagement; the show also set a record (for a musical) for the sale price of film rights.

In addition to an expertly edited score and detailed commentary, this edition will publish, for the first time, a book fully informed by the Broadway run (all previously available scripts have presented a pre-rehearsal version). The editors have reconstructed the performing script with reference to a number of archival sources, including an assistant stage manager's script and the producer's copy of the script in the Sam Harris papers at Princeton University. The book is considerably tighter than any previously available version and shaves at least half an hour off the running time of the show. Since Moss Hart directed the book scenes in 1941, we know that he himself introduced the cuts made in rehearsal and during the tryout.

Painstaking research undergirds all volumes of the Kurt Weill Edition, and work on *Lady in the Dark* has unearthed a number of significant sources. A major discovery in the Danny Kaye papers at the Library of Congress made it possible to publish the original orchestration of a well-known cut number, "It's Never Too Late to Mendelssohn" (two versions, no less, only one originally intended for Kaye). Although the number was excised, it will be available for individual song rental. Other collections at Harvard and Yale yielded photos and correspondence that added significantly to our understanding of the genesis of *Lady in the Dark*. Original Broadway instrumental and chorus parts, a vocal score used in rehearsals, and a complete copyist's score made originally in 1941, held by the Foundation, were essential for preparing a reliable edition of the score, along with Weill's own holograph full score held by Yale University.

For the first time, theaters will be able to rent complete sets of performance material—full and vocal scores, instrumental parts, script—that match in every detail and are designed to be used together. The scores and parts have been tested in two different productions, allowing the editors to correct errors and put the materials in the best shape possible before printing. At last, one of Weill's greatest Broadway triumphs is represented by an edition that does it justice.

523

DD Allegro barbaro (♩ = 152)
522 "Tschaikowsky" Picc ①

The musical score is for the orchestral introduction to "Tschaikowsky" in the Circus Dream. It is in 2/4 time and marked Allegro barbaro with a tempo of 152 beats per minute. The score includes parts for Flute (Fl), Clarinet 1 (Cl), Clarinet 2 (Cl), Clarinet 3 (Cl), Trumpet 1 (Tpt), Trumpet 2 (Tpt), Trombone (Tbn), and Milledrum (MilDr). The Flute part has a piccolo flourish in the second measure. The Milledrum part has a 'tacet' marking in the second measure. The score is marked with dynamics like mf and f.

The orchestral introduction to "Tschaikowsky" in the Circus Dream, first performed by Danny Kaye. A footnote to the Flute part explains that the piccolo's flourish in the second measure was marked *tacet* before the original production decided to omit the first two measures altogether. This excerpt from the engraved score does not show keyboards or strings.